The plaster statuette of Joseph Priestley has been placed in a new display case and moved from the first-floor hallway to a location in the Drawing Room at Priestley House. The construction of the new case was financed by the Friends of the Joseph Priestley House.

This statuette is painted plaster and was produced between 1874 and 1920 in Esher, England, at the studio of sculptor Francis John Williamson (1833-1920). It was created from a cast of the modello (small scale model) used to guide carving of a large marble statue of Joseph Priestley. The marble statue was unveiled outside Town Hall in Birmingham, England on August 1, 1874, during ceremonies celebrating the 100th anniversary of the discovery of oxygen.

This statuette was donated by Edgar Fahs Smith to the Priestley Museum in 1926. References to five commemorative statuettes have been found.

NEW DISPLAY CASE CREATED FOR PRIESTLEY STATUETTE

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FRIENDS OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE

P.O. Box 346
Lewisburg, PA. 17837

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Volunteers for the Friends of the Joseph Priestley House wrapped Christmas presents for shoppers at the Susquehanna Valley Mall last December. After expenses, the effort generated $340. Photo shows two volunteers – Sandy Houdelshell, left, and Jo Ann Long – hard at work.

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THOMAS BRESENHAN HONORED AS PRIESTLEY HOUSE 2014 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

As president of the Friends of Joseph Priestley House from 2009 through 2014, Thomas P. Bresenhan guided the transition of Priestley House from a museum operated by professional staff of the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) to a volunteer-based operation.

Tom negotiated an agreement with PHMC officials to use volunteer docents so Priestley House could remain open to the public after the professional staff was withdrawn. He coordinated with PHMC the total interior renovation of the Pond Building, an auxiliary space used for History Camp, demonstrations, and community use.

Tom spearheaded the development of two major exhibits: Dr. Priestley’s laboratory and a timeline of the scientist’s life, both of which enhance the visitors’ experience.

His enthusiasm helped achieve a long-sought goal: the production of a DVD titled Ronald Blatchley as Joseph Priestley, a 10-minute video that is available in the Visitors Center and is also available for viewing online at youtube.com.

Tom coordinated and helped script two videos on Priestley’s gas discoveries. He worked to return Dr. Priestley’s microscope from state storage and coordinated the installation in a new secure display case.

Working to enhance the volunteers’ experience, Tom’s efforts achieved field trips to Dickinson College, Carlisle, where Dr. Priestley’s scientific apparatus is displayed, and to the State Museum in Harrisburg to see Priestley-related archeological artifacts. His informed, positive and friendly approach is invaluable in these endeavors.

Dee Ann Casteel, associate professor of chemistry at Bucknell University, has been elected president of the Friends of the Joseph Priestley House for 2015.
A CHANCE TO SHARE A DRINK WITH DR. PRIESTLEY ‘WOULD BE AWESOME’

George Godlewski is the newest member of the board of the Friends of the Joseph Priestley House. His term runs from 2015 through 2017.

As George explains: “My attraction to the Joseph Priestley House is an expression of my attachment to the community. We should all support our community which is when we can, in small or great ways. Our community, like life itself, is what we make it.”

“I am intrigued by the Enlightenment of which Priestley and his colleagues were a part. What a wonderful time in history, and we ‘own’ a piece of it! Would it not be awesome to share a glass of wine and an hour of conversation with them?”

George says that during the late 1980s, he and his wife Jan “were seeking a place to raise our sons and we discovered it in Northumberland. Northumberland appealed to us when we first drove through.

PRISTLEY HOUSE VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS IN DEMAND

Volunteers for the Joseph Priestley House are always in demand. The historical site attracts approximately 800 visitors a year. Volunteers staffing the Visitors Center welcome guests, collect fees for the tour, and handle gift shop sales. Other volunteers lead tours through the house and around the property.

“Our regular operating hours are every Saturday and Sunday 1-4 p.m. from mid-March until the end of November,” said Jo Ann Long, Volunteer Coordinator for the Friends of the Joseph Priestley House, which operates the museum. “We have three people working per day. Two handle the Visitors Center, and one is the tour guide. If we have extra visitors, then we have two tours happening consecutively.”

To become a tour guide, a volunteer needs to work the Visitors Center first and shadow the current tour volunteer and a former board member Dave Richard.

“Years after our arrival here, we uncovered a text of our desires as we explored this move and we had met them all. We raised and schooled our sons here and now await the arrival of a granddaughter. The essence of our desires was community including history and charm. For many years we lived on King Street and cared for an old home. In 2006, we escaped the continual upkeep by building a new home.

“I share my life with my wife and my sons Aaron and Matthew and their wives. Our family and network of wonderful friends continually enrich our lives. “Through these years I have been at Geisinger working to deliver and improve healthcare. Following several roles, I am now the Vice President for Quality and Safety with responsibilities across the Geisinger Health System. In addition, I am an adjunct faculty member at Marywood University.”

When someone feels up to the task, he or she can be a tour guide. We have four special program days in which volunteers come in costume throughout the year. The next special program will be Oxygen Day on August 2,” Long said.

If interested in becoming a volunteer, you may call the Priestley House any Saturday or Sunday from 1-4 p.m. and talk to the people working that day. The number is: 570-473-9474. You may also express your interest in an email addressed to: info@josephpriestleyhouse.org.

“We currently have 17 volunteers who consistently help each month. Also, there are volunteers who only can help with the four special programs,” Long said.

Volunteers can also help with the English garden and take care of the flowers in the vases outside the house. They are also welcome to take part in special fund-raising projects.

“Joseph Priestley, The Coloring Book” is now on sale in the Visitors Center at Priestley House.

Illustrations for the 28-page publication were drawn by Steve Klinger, a freelance artist based in Freeburg.

“Joseph Priestley, The Coloring Book” is available now in the Visitors Center at Priestley House. Please call 570-473-9474 or visit www.josephpriestleyhouse.org to learn more information.

Joseph Priestley House
243 Priestley AVE.
NORTHUMBERLAND, PA 17857

2015 HOURS OF OPERATION

March thru November
Every Weekend
Except Easter Sunday
Visitors Center
Open 1-4 p.m. Tours Given at 1, 2 and 3 p.m.

Special Tours
Can be arranged by calling 570-473-9474 or by e-mail at info@josephpriestleyhouse.org

Special Assistance
Individuals who need special assistance or accommodation to visit the Priestley House should contact us in advance to discuss their needs.

To join the Friends of Priestley House Call 570-473-9474 or visit www.josephpriestleyhouse.org

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Illustrations for the 28-page publication were drawn by Steve Klinger, a freelance artist based in Freeburg.

The black-and-white pictures show a number of scenes from the scientist’s life. One drawing, for example, shows Dr. Priestley standing in front of a coffee house in London chatting with his friend Benjamin Franklin. Another shows Dr. Priestley doing an experiment in his Northumberland laboratory.

Most of the text was written by Seth Rohrbach, a long-time Priestley House volunteer and a former board member of the Friends of the Joseph Priestley House.

Published by the Friends group, the coloring book is intended to teach children a little about the life of Dr. Priestley in a way that is both educational and entertaining.

“The Priestley House is like a treasured local resource,” said Steve, who regards himself as a local historian. “It would be nice to know the coloring book leads kids to further inquiry into the history of the area.”

Seth and Steve said that many of the drawings date to 2000 when as summer interns at Priestley House, they created a coloring book especially for History Camp. Steve also drew a number of pictures especially for the current publication, which has been commercially printed.

John Moore, a member of the Friends board, edited and produced the coloring book. Jamie Jay, a graphic artist in Sunbury, did the layout.

He was charged with publishing material in 1799 that libeled the president.

Cooper asked the court to subpoena President Adams as a hostile defense witness, but the presiding judge – Justice Samuel Chase of the U.S. Supreme Court – scolded Cooper for thinking that Adams would be called to testify: “Sir, this cannot be permitted,” the judge declared.

Convicted following a one-day trial, Cooper spent six months in prison. He lived in Priestley House following his release.

Other editors targeted by the Federalists included Bennington’s Franklin Bache, a grandson of Benjamin Franklin. Bache’s newspaper, the Philadelphia Aurora, frequently attacked President Adams.

Slack’s presentation will take place in the Pond Building beginning at 2 p.m.

The author, who lives in Connecticut, has published several other books, including Noble Obsession: Charles B. Adams, Dr. Thomas Hancocks, and the Race to Unlock the Greatest Industrial Secret of the Nineteenth Century.

Liberity’s First Crisis
Adams, Jefferson and the Alien, Sedition Acts
FREESPEECH
Charles Slack

NEW COLORING BOOK DESPETS LIFE OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

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